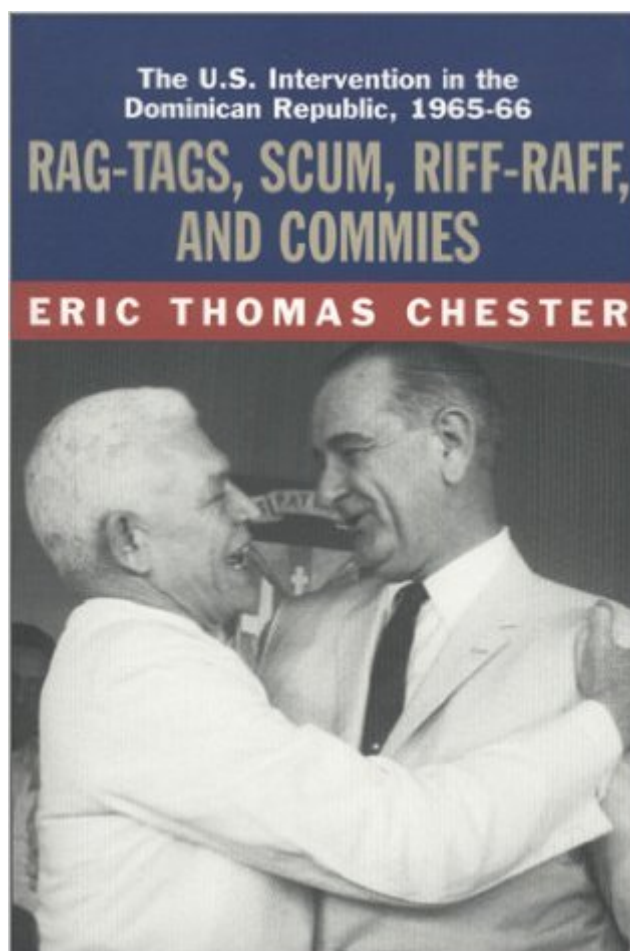


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Rag-Tags, Scum, Riff-Raff And Commies: The U.S. Intervention In The Dominican Republic, 1965-1966



Synopsis

In April 1965, a popular rebellion in the Dominican Republic toppled the remnants of the U.S.-backed Trujillo dictatorship setting the stage for the master tinkers of America's Cold War machine. In this groundbreaking study, Eric Thomas Chester carefully reconstructs the events that followed into a thriller of historical sweep, and creates a stunning portrait of how the U.S. government--from President Lyndon Johnson on down--used the Dominican Republic as a tool of its imperial arrogance. Eric Thomas Chester explains how the U.S. intervention was in the tradition of gunboat diplomacy as well as a consequence of Cold War ideology, and the Cuban Revolution. After the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Haiti in 1934 and the initiation of Roosevelt's so-called "good neighbor policy," the United States had refrained from sending its own troops to intervene in Latin America. The 1965 invasion broke this pattern and reinitiated an era of direct armed intervention in Latin America. The result was that by early May, with more than thirty thousand troops deployed, there was a greater U.S. military presence in the Dominican Republic than in South Vietnam. In this fascinating account, Chester makes extensive use of recently declassified diplomatic and intelligence documents to offer a nuanced and textured study of the workings of covert as well as diplomatic initiatives and provides a thorough analysis of U.S. Cold War foreign policy in the region.

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Customer Reviews

The author portrays a very fascinating brief experiment in American support of politicians in the Third World who were mild social democrats. The Dominican exile Juan Bosch and his Social

Democratic party the PRD received a great deal of CIA support from 1959-62. The U.S. had decided to withdraw its support from the barbarian dictator Rafael Trujillo who had been in power since 1930. Trujillo had risen to the leadership of the Dominican army during the very brutal U.S. occupation of the Dominican Republic of 1916-24. They could not gain any sort of support whatever in the hemisphere against Fidel Castro if they continued to support Trujillo. The U.S. tried, without disrupting the power of the military or the landed oligarchy, to get rid of Trujilloism in the DR, particularly after Trujillo himself was assassinated at the end of May 1961. Bosch assumed power through a democratic election in February 1963 and spent most of his time trying not to upset the military. It was no use. Bosch granted considerable freedom for unions to organize. Thus, for instance the U.S. owned La Romana sugar refinery, the largest in the DR, was forced to grant a 30 percent increase in wages. He also made lofty plans to redistribute to the poor the vast estates held formerly by Trujillo and his associates but only redistributed them to about 600 families. He made the mistake of telling the U.S. ambassador John B. Martin that he planned to place limits on land ownership and redistribute land held over those limits to the poor. He also wanted to place a twenty percent tax on the large landholders. Martin denounced this plan and Bosch withdrew it but it was one more sign to U.S. policy makers that Bosch was very unreliable.

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